

The photosensitive composition according to the present invention may further comprise a water-soluble compound as a shape stabilizer. The shape stabilizer refers to an agent which can increase the steepness of a side wall of the section of a pattern formed by removing the light exposed area.

As described above, in the modified polysilsesquiazane according to the present invention, the Si-N bond is cleaved by light irradiation, and the cleaved parts are then reacted with moisture in the atmosphere to give a silanol bond. In this case, since the modified polysilsesquiazane is highly hydrophobic, the formation of the silanol bond rapidly takes place in a portion near the coating surface in contact with the moisture-containing atmosphere. In the coating in its inside not in contact with the moisture-containing atmosphere, however, as the portion is closer to the interface of the substrate and the coating, the amount of water, which permeates and arrives at this portion through the coating surface, is smaller. Therefore, the formation of the silanol bond is less likely to occur. For this reason, the modified polysilsesquiazane coating has such a sensitivity difference that the photosensitivity lowers from the surface toward the interface of the substrate. Therefore, as the portion is closer to the coating surface, the silanol bond is more easily formed and the portion is more easily dissolved and removed by the development. Consequently, the side wall of the section of the

pattern becomes gently sloped. This phenomenon is causative of a limitation on pattern refinement or improved resolution. In this case, when a water-soluble compound is added as the shape stabilizer, the side wall of the section of the pattern can be made steep and the resolution can be enhanced. Specifically, the addition of the water-soluble compound can lower the hydrophobicity of the photosensitive coating and can accelerate access of water from the coating surface in contact with the moisture-containing atmosphere to the inside of the coating. Therefore, the difference in silanol bond formation rate between the coating in its portion near the surface and the coating in its portion near the interface of the coating and the substrate, that is, sensitivity difference, becomes small. This can lower irradiation light energy necessary for satisfactorily dissolving and removing the coating in its portion corresponding to the mask opening to a position near the interface of the coating and the substrate and, in its turn, can lower energy of "light oozing" to the mask shielded part. In the part where the energy of "oozed light" has been reduced to a level that is too small to cleave the Si-N bond of the modified polysilsesquiazane, even when the part is exposed indirectly to the "oozed light," the silanol bond is not formed. Therefore, that part is not dissolved and removed during development. Consequently, in the mask shielded part, the dissolution and removal of that part is reduced, and the side wall of the section of the pattern is made steep, and most preferably vertical.

It could be easily understood that rendering the side wall of the section of the pattern steep can be achieved independently of the level of the photosensitivity of the photosensitive composition. Specifically, when the photosensitivity of the photosensitive composition in its part near the substrate is high, as described above, the side wall of the section of the pattern can be made steep by lowering the irradiation light energy. Further, for example, when the photosensitivity of the whole photosensitive composition has been lowered due to the addition of the water-soluble compound according to the present invention, in some cases, the irradiation light energy necessary for satisfactorily dissolving and removing the coating in its part corresponding to the opening of the mask to the position near the interface of the coating and the substrate should be enhanced. In this case, however, since the energy of the

"oozed light" necessary for cleaving the Si-N bond in the modified polysilsesquiazane in its mask shielded part is also similarly enhanced, the side wall of the section of the pattern can be similarly made steep when the sensitivity difference of the coating is small. In short, the side wall of the section of the pattern can be made steep independently of the photosensitivity level of the photosensitive composition by reducing the difference in photosensitivity between the part near the coating in its surface and the coating in its part near the interface of the coating and the substrate.

Even when the water-soluble compound is insoluble in neutral water, the water-soluble compound is useful so far as it is soluble in acidic or basic water. The reason for this is that, when the water-soluble compound is soluble in acidic water, the radiation exposed area is made acidic by an acid generated from the photoacid generating agent while, when the water-soluble compound is soluble in basic water, the penetration of the developer can be accelerated during development with an aqueous alkaline solution. In any case, access of water from the surface of the coating to the inside of the coating is accelerated, and, thus, the difference in sensitivity between the coating in its part near the surface and the coating in its part near the interface of the coating and the substrate becomes small.

The water-soluble compound according to the present invention may be a monomer or a polymer. A solubility of the water-soluble compound in neutral water, acidic water, or basic water of not less than about 0.01 g/100 mL suffices for contemplated results, and the water-soluble compound is not necessarily required to be easily soluble in the water. In this case, however, as described below, since the water-soluble compound is preferably homogeneously mixed with the photosensitive composition, the water-soluble compound should be satisfactorily miscible with the modified polysilsesquiazane and the solvents.

Specific examples of such compounds include 2-nitroaniline, 3-nitroaniline, 4-nitroaniline, 2-nitro-4-aminotoluene, 3-nitro-2-aminotoluene, 3-nitro-4-aminotoluene, 4-nitro-2-aminotoluene, 5-nitro-2-aminotoluene, 6-nitro-2-aminotoluene, 4-nitrobenzene-azo-orcinol, 1-(4-nitrobenzensulfonyl)-1H-1,2,4-triazole, 5-nitrobenzimidazole, 4-

nitrobenzylacetate, 2-nitrobenzylalcohol, 3-nitrobenzylalcohol, 4-nitrobenzylalcohol, nitrocyclohexane, 1-nitropropane, 2-nitropropane, nifedipine, 2,7-dinitrofluorene, 2,7-dinitro-9-fluorenone, 3,3'-dinitrobenzophenone, 3,4'-dinitrobenzophenone, propylene carbonate, ethylene carbonate, amide compounds such as trifluoroacetamide, ammonium trifluoroacetate, water-soluble acrylic polymers, water-soluble epoxy polymers, and water-soluble melamine polymers. Particularly suitable water-soluble compounds include 2-nitroaniline, 3-nitroaniline, 4-nitroaniline, 2-nitro-4-aminotoluene, propylene carbonate, ethylene carbonate, and water-soluble acrylic polymers.

The photosensitive composition according to the present invention may contain, as a shape stabilizer, the water-soluble compound in an amount of 0.01 to 50% by mass based on the mass of the modified polysilsesquiazane. The optimal mixing ratio varies depending upon the properties of individual water-soluble compounds. However, when the content of the water-soluble compound is smaller than 0.01% by mass, the effect of improving the slope of the side wall of the pattern is small. On the other hand, when the content of the water-soluble compound is larger than 50% by mass, problems associated with film properties after the development, such as defects and unsatisfactory strength occur. The content of the water-soluble compound in the mass of the modified polysilsesquiazane is preferably 0.05 to 40% by mass, more preferably 0.1 to 30% by mass.

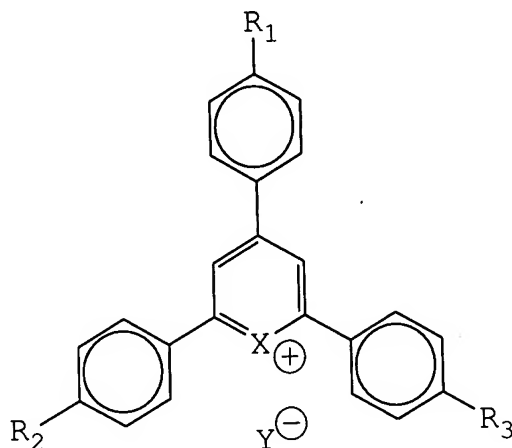
The photosensitive composition of the present invention may be prepared by adding the above photoacid generating agent, optionally together with the water-soluble compound as the shape stabilizer, to the modified polysilsesquiazane. The photoacid generating agent and the water-soluble compound are preferably homogeneously mixed with the modified polysilsesquiazane. Methods desirably usable for achieving the homogeneous mixing include one wherein the modified polysilsesquiazane is mixed with the photoacid generating agent and the water-soluble compound while thorough stirring and one wherein each of them is diluted with a solvent which will be described later followed by mixing. In particular, in the mixing, when the photoacid generating agent and the water-soluble compound are solid, preferably, they are dissolved in a solvent before mixing. At the time of the addition of the

photoacid generating agent and the water-soluble compound, the temperature and the pressure are not particularly limited, and the addition may be carried out at room temperature under the atmospheric pressure. In order to avoid the excitation of the photoacid generating agent, the procedure from the addition of the photoacid generating agent to the step of development which will be described later is preferably carried out in an environment free from wavelengths photosensitive to the photoacid generating agent used, preferably in a dark place.

In some cases, mixing a sensitizing dye into the photosensitive composition according to the present invention is advantageous. For some photoacid generating agents, for example, 3,3',4,4'-tetra(t-butylperoxycarbonyl)benzophenone, the excitation wavelength region of the photoacid generating agent per se is shorter than about 330 nm. When light irradiation is carried out using an excimer laser, such as a KrF (248 nm) or ArF (193 nm) excimer laser, the photoacid generating agent is directly excited. Therefore, in this case, the use of the sensitizing dye is not necessary. When an inexpensive light source such as a high pressure mercury lamp (360 to 430 nm) is used, however, the combined use of the photosensitive composition and a sensitizing dye excited by this wavelength region can realize indirect excitation of the photoacid generating agent. Thus, the combined use of the photosensitive composition and the sensitizing dye can realize patterning of the photosensitive composition according to the present invention with a conventional inexpensive light source.

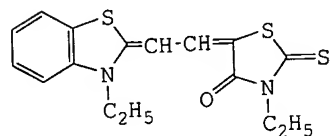
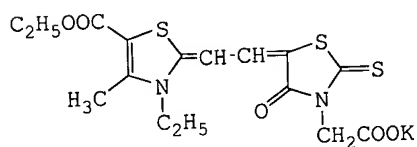
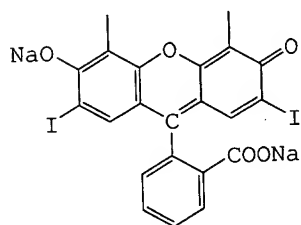
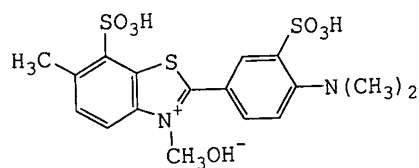
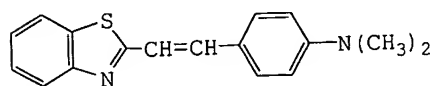
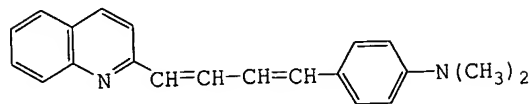
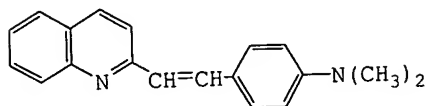
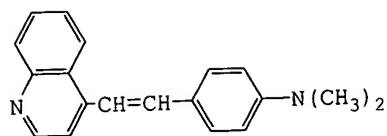
Sensitizing dyes usable in the photosensitive composition according to the present invention include coumarin, ketocoumarin, their derivatives, thiopyrilium salts and the like, specifically p-bis(o-methylstyryl)benzene, 7-dimethylamino-4-methylquinolone-2,7-amino-4-methylcoumarin, 4,6-dimethyl-7-ethylaminocoumarin, 2-(p-dimethylaminostyryl)-pyridyl-methyl iodide, 7-diethylaminocoumarin, 7-diethylamino-4-methylcoumarin, 2,3,5,6-1H,4H-tetrahydro-8-methylquinolizino-<9,9a,1-gh>coumarin, 7-diethylamino-4-trifluoromethylcoumarin, 7-dimethylamino-4-trifluoromethylcoumarin, 7-amino-4-trifluoromethylcoumarin, 2,3,5,6-1H,4H-tetrahydroquinolizino-<9,9a,1-gh>coumarin, 7-ethylamino-6-methyl-4-trifluoromethylcoumarin, 7-ethylamino-4-trifluoromethylcoumarin, 2,3,5,6-1H,4H-tetrahydro-9-

- carboethoxyquinolizino-<9,9a,1-gh>coumarin, 3-(2'-N-methylbenzimidazolyl)-7-N,N-diethylaminocoumarin, 3-(2'-N-trifluoromethylpiperidino-<3,2-g>coumarin, 2-(p-dimethylaminostyryl)-benzothiazolylethyliodide, 3-(2'-benzimidazolyl)-7-N,N-diethylaminocoumarin, 3-(2'-benzothiazolyl)-7-N,N-diethylaminocoumarin, and pyrilium salts and thiopyrilium salts represented by the following formula.



X	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	Y
S	OC ₄ H ₉	H	H	BF ₄
S	OC ₄ H ₉	H	H	BF ₄
S	OC ₄ H ₉	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	BF ₄
S	H	OCH ₃	OCH ₃	BF ₄
S	N(CH ₃) ₂	H	H	ClO ₂
O	OC ₄ H ₉	H	H	SbF ₆

- 10 Specific examples of other sensitizing dyes include the following compounds.



Particularly suitable sensitizing dyes include 7-diethylamino-4-methylcoumarin and 7-diethylamino-4-trifluoromethylcoumarin.

- 5 When the sensitizing dye is additionally used, the content of the sensitizing dye in the photosensitive composition according to the present invention may be generally 0.05 to 50% by mass, preferably 1 to 20% by mass, based on the mass of the modified polysilsesquiazane.

When the sensitizing dye is mixed into the photosensitive

composition according to the present invention, the resultant film is sometimes colored. When the photosensitive composition of the present invention is used to form a patterned interlayer insulation film which is then applied to display devices or the like, however, in some cases, the interlayer insulation film after baking should be transparent to visible light. Even in this case, the photoacid generating agent contained in the photosensitive composition according to the present invention can decompose the sensitizing dye during baking of the film to render the interlayer insulation film after baking transparent to light.

Further, an interlayer insulation film having a higher level of transparency can be formed by separately adding an oxidation catalyst, which is not directly involved in the photoreaction but can decompose the sensitizing dye during baking of the film, to the photosensitive composition of the present invention. Examples of such oxidation catalysts include organic compounds and fine particles of metals such as palladium propionate, palladium acetate, platinum acetylacetonate, platinum ethylacetonate, fine particles of palladium, and fine particles of platinum. When the oxidation catalyst is added, the content of the oxidation catalyst in the photosensitive composition according to the present invention may be generally 0.05 to 10% by mass, preferably 0.1 to 5% by mass, based on the mass of the modified polysilsesquiazane. Further, the addition of the oxidation catalyst can realize decomposition of the unnecessary dye for decoloration, as well as the acceleration of the conversion of the modified polysilsesquiazane to a ceramic.

When a solvent is used, preferred are: aromatic compounds such as benzene, toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene, diethylbenzene, trimethylbenzene, and triethylbenzene; cyclohexane; cyclohexene; decahydronaphthalene; dipentene; saturated hydrocarbon compounds such as n-pentane, i-pentane, n-hexane, i-hexane, n-heptane, i-heptane, n-octane, i-octane, n-nonane, i-nonane, n-decane, and i-decane; ethylcyclohexane; methylcyclohexane; p-menthane; ethers such as dipropylether and dibutylether; ketones such as methyl isobutyl ketone (MIBK); and esters such as butyl acetate, cyclohexyl acetate, and butyl stearate. When these solvents are used, two or more of them may be used as a mixture from the viewpoint of regulating the solubility of the modified polysilsesquiazane and the evaporation rate of the solvent.

The amount (content) of the solvent is selected to provide good workability depending upon a coating method adopted. Further, since the amount (content) of the solvent varies depending upon the average molecular weight, the molecular weight distribution, and the structure of the modified polysilsesquiazane used, the solvent may be properly mixed. When the stability of the modified polysilsesquiazane and the productivity are taken into consideration, however, the concentration of the modified polysilsesquiazane is preferably 0.1 to 50% by mass, more preferably 0.1 to 40% by mass.

Further, the photosensitive composition according to the present invention may optionally contain a suitable filler and/or an extender. Examples of fillers include fine powder of inorganic oxides including silica, alumina, zirconia, and mica and inorganic nonoxides such as silicon carbide and silicon nitride. The addition of powder of a metal such as aluminum, zinc, or copper is also possible for some application. These fillers may be in various forms such as acicular (including whisker), particulate, and flaky forms which may be used either solely or as a mixture of two or more. The size of particles of these fillers is preferably smaller than the thickness of a film formed by single application. The amount of the filler added is in the range of 0.05 to 10 parts by mass, particularly preferably in the range of 0.2 to 3 parts by mass, based on one part by mass of the modified polysilsesquiazane.

The photosensitive composition according to the present invention may optionally contain various pigments, leveling agents, antifoaming agents, antistatic agents, ultraviolet absorbers, pH adjustors, dispersants, surface modifiers, plasticizers, drying accelerators, and flow preventives.

The present invention also provides a method for forming a patterned interlayer insulation film using the above photosensitive composition. Specifically, the method according to the present invention comprises the steps of: forming a coating of the above photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film; applying light pattern-wise to the coating; and dissolving and removing the coating in its exposed area.

The coating of the photosensitive composition according to the present invention may be formed on a suitable substrate such as a

silicon substrate or a glass substrate by a conventional coating method such as dipping, roll coating, bar coating, brush coating, spray coating, flow coating, or spin coating. When the substrate is a film, the coating may be formed by gravure coating. If desired, the step of drying the coating may be provided separately.

The photosensitive composition may be coated once or twice or more repeatedly according to need to give a desired coating thickness. According to the present invention, the selection of the linking group other than the silazane bond can improve the film thickness limit. Therefore, a crack-free interlayer insulation film having a thickness of not less than 5.0 μm , preferably not less than 10.0 μm , can be provided.

After the formation of the coating of the photosensitive composition according to the present invention, the coating is preferably prebaked (heat-treated) from the viewpoints of drying the coating and reducing the amount of degassing in a later step. The step of prebaking may be generally carried out at 40 to 200°C, preferably 60 to 120°C, for 10 to 180 sec, preferably 30 to 90 sec, in the case of prebaking using a hot plate and for 1 to 30 min, preferably 5 to 15 min, in the case of prebaking in a clean oven.

The formation of the coating of the photosensitive composition according to the present invention and optional prebaking are followed by the application of light to the coating in a pattern-wise manner. Light sources usable herein include high pressure mercury lamps, low pressure mercury lamps, metal halide lamps, and excimer lasers. Light with wavelengths of 360 to 430 nm (from a high pressure mercury lamp) is generally used as irradiation light except for ultrafine patterning in the case of semiconductors or the like. Among others, in the case of liquid crystal display devices, light with a wavelength of 430 nm is in many cases used. In this case, as described above, the combination of the photosensitive composition according to the present invention with the sensitizing dye is advantageous.

The energy of the irradiation light may vary depending upon the light source and the desired film thickness. In general, however, the energy is 5 to 4,000 mJ/cm^2 , preferably 10 to 2,000 mJ/cm^2 . When the energy is less than 5 mJ/cm^2 , the modified polysilsesquiazane is not satisfactorily decomposed. On the other hand, when the energy is

higher than $4,000 \text{ mJ/cm}^2$, the exposure is excessive, sometimes leading to halation.

A conventional photomask may be used for pattern-wise irradiation, and the photomask is well known to a person having ordinary skill in the art.

The irradiation may be generally carried out in an environment such as an ambient atmosphere (the air) or a nitrogen atmosphere. Alternatively, an atmosphere enriched with oxygen may be adopted from the viewpoint of accelerating the decomposition of the modified polysilsesquiazane.

Upon exposure of a coating of the photosensitive composition to light in a pattern-wise manner, Si-N bonds of the modified polysilsesquiazane in the exposure area of the coating are cleaved, and the cleaved parts are further reacted with moisture in an atmosphere to give silanol (Si-OH) bonds and, thus, to decompose the modified polysilsesquiazane. When the coating after the exposure is developed, the photosensitive composition in its exposed area is removed while the unexposed area stays on the substrate to form a pattern (a positive-working pattern). Since the residual modified polysilsesquiazane is not substantially swollen in a developer which will be described later, the pattern of the irradiated light is substantially completely consistent with the pattern of the decomposed and removed modified polysilsesquiazane. Therefore, good pattern accuracy (resolution) can be provided.

In the removal of the exposed area of the modified polysilsesquiazane composition, that is, in the development, an aqueous alkaline solution may be used as a developer. Aqueous alkaline solutions usable herein include aqueous solutions of tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide (TMAH), sodium silicate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and the like. In the development according to the present invention, the use of an about 2% aqueous TMAH solution, which is a standard alkaline developer in the industry, is convenient.

The time necessary for the development is generally 0.1 to 5 min, preferably 0.5 to 3 min, although it varies depending upon the film thickness and the solvent used. The development treatment temperature is generally 20 to 50°C , preferably 20 to 30°C .

Compounds known as the so-called "dissolution preventive" in the art may be added to the photosensitive composition according to the present invention from the viewpoint of enhancing the development efficiency. A conventional dissolution preventive prevents the elution of the polymer in the unexposed area of the coating into an alkaline developer by taking advantage of the hydrophobicity. In the exposed area, however, upon exposure or upon the action of the photoacid generating agent, the dissolution preventive per se is decomposed to develop hydrophilicity, thereby accelerating the decomposition of the polymer. As described above, the modified polysilsesquiazane according to the present invention is not dissolved in the developer and thus does not substantially enjoy the merit of dissolution preventive function of the dissolution preventive in the unexposed area. However, it has been found that, in the exposed area, the dissolution acceleration function can be advantageously exhibited. Specifically, the addition of the so-called "dissolution preventive" to the photosensitive composition according to the present invention can improve the development efficiency by virtue of increased dissolution rate of the exposed area. Specific examples of dissolution preventives include t-butoxycarbonylated (hereinafter referred to as "t-BOC") catechol, t-butoxycarbonylated hydroquinone, di-t-butyl benzophenone-4,4'-dicarboxylate, and di-t-butyl 4,4'-oxydibenzolate. The amount of the dissolution preventive added may be in the range of 0.1 to 40% by mass, preferably in the range of 1 to 30% by mass, based on the photosensitive composition.

Upon the development, the photosensitive modified polysilsesquiazane composition in its exposed area is removed to complete patterning. In order to use the patterned modified polysilsesquiazane film as an interlayer insulation film, the patterned modified polysilsesquiazane film may be allowed to stand for a long period of time or may be baked to convert the patterned modified polysilsesquiazane film to an excellent silica-based ceramic film having high heat resistance, low permittivity, transparency and other properties. When the modified polysilsesquiazane film is allowed to stand after the development, standing generally in an ambient atmosphere (in the air at room temperature) for a long period of time, for example, for one day or

longer suffices for contemplated results. On the other hand, when the modified polysilsesquiazane film is baked, the baking temperature is generally 50 to 1000°C, preferably 100 to 1000°C, more preferably 150 to 450°C, although it may vary depending upon the type of the modified polysilsesquiazane used and the heat resistance of substrates, electronic components and the like. The baking time may be generally not less than 5 min, preferably not less than 10 min. The baking may be generally carried out in an ambient atmosphere (in the air). An atmosphere having increased oxygen content and/or partial pressure of water vapor, however, may be adopted from the viewpoint of accelerating the oxidation of the modified polysilsesquiazane.

The interlayer insulation film provided by the present invention has a permittivity of not more than 5 and, in some cases, a permittivity of not more than 3.3, and a resistivity of not less than 10^{13} Ωcm.

The following examples further illustrate the present invention.

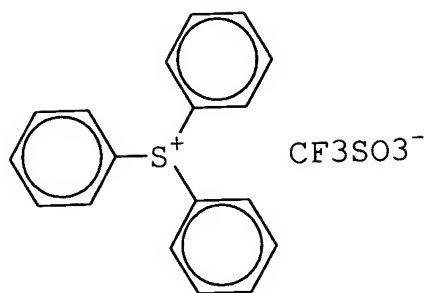
Comparative Example 1

The inside of a four-necked flask equipped with a gas inlet tube, a mechanical stirrer, and a Dewar condenser was purged with dry nitrogen. Thereafter, a starting solution was prepared in the flask by diluting methyltrichlorosilane (CH_3SiCl_3) with pyridine to give a monomer concentration of 10% by mass and was cooled on ice. Ammonia (NH_3) was mixed little by little into the starting solution through the gas inlet tube to cause an ammonolysis reaction.

After the completion of the reaction, a polymer represented by - $(\text{SiCH}_3(\text{NH})_{1.5})_n$ - was obtained. This polymer had a weight average molecular weight (as determined using polystyrene as a standard) of 4729.

Next, the polymer was subjected to solvent displacement to give a propylene glycol monomethyl ether acetate (PGMEA) solution. To the solution was added 1% by mass, based on the mass of the polymer, of the following photoacid generating agent PAG-1. Thus, a photosensitive composition was prepared.

PAG-1:

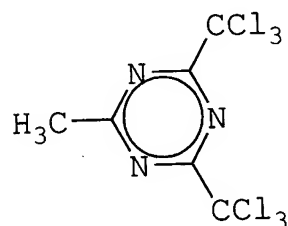


Comparative Example 2

The inside of a four-necked flask equipped with a gas inlet tube, a mechanical stirrer, and a Dewar condenser was purged with dry nitrogen. Thereafter, a starting solution was prepared in the flask by diluting methyltrichlorosilane (CH_3SiCl_3) and 5% by mole, based on the amount of methyltrichlorosilane, of diphenylchlorosilane (Ph_2SiCl_2) with pyridine to give a total monomer concentration of 10% by mass and was cooled on ice. Ammonia (NH_3) was mixed little by little into the starting solution through the gas inlet tube to cause an ammonolysis reaction.

After the completion of the reaction, a copolymer represented by $-(\text{SiCH}_3(\text{NH})_{1.5})_n-$ and $-(\text{SiPh}_2(\text{NH}))_n-$ was obtained. This polymer had a weight average molecular weight (as determined using polystyrene as a standard) of 4240.

Next, the copolymer was subjected to solvent displacement to give a xylene solution. To the solution was added 2% by mass, based on the mass of the polymer, of the following photoacid generating agent PAG-2. Thus, a photosensitive composition was prepared.



Example 1

The inside of a four-necked flask equipped with a gas inlet tube, a mechanical stirrer, and a Dewar condenser was purged with dry nitrogen. Thereafter, a starting solution was prepared in the flask by diluting methyltrichlorosilane (CH_3SiCl_3) and 5% by mole, based on the amount of methyltrichlorosilane, of 1,4-bis(dimethylchlorosilyl)benzene

(ClSi(CH₃)₂PhSi(CH₃)₂Cl) with pyridine to give a total monomer concentration of 10% by mass and was cooled on ice. Ammonia (NH₃) was mixed little by little into the starting solution through the gas inlet tube to cause an ammonolysis reaction.

5 After the completion of the reaction, a copolymer represented by -(SiCH₃(NH)_{1.5})_n- and -(SiMe₂PhSiMe₂(NH))_n- was obtained. This polymer had a weight average molecular weight (as determined using polystyrene as a standard) of 4866.

10 Next, the copolymer was subjected to solvent displacement to give a PGMEA solution. To the solution was added 2% by mass, based on the mass of the polymer, of the above photoacid generating agent PAG-2. Thus, a photosensitive composition was prepared.

Example 2

15 The inside of a four-necked flask equipped with a gas inlet tube, a mechanical stirrer, and a Dewar condenser was purged with dry nitrogen. Thereafter, a starting solution was prepared in the flask by diluting methyltrichlorosilane (CH₃SiCl₃) and 5% by mole, based on the amount of methyltrichlorosilane, of 1,7-dichlorohexamethyltrisiloxane (ClSi(CH₃)₂OSi(CH₃)₂OSi-(CH₃)₂Cl) with pyridine to give a total monomer
20 concentration of 10% by mass and was cooled on ice. Ammonia (NH₃) was mixed little by little into the starting solution through the gas inlet tube to cause an ammonolysis reaction.

After the completion of the reaction, a copolymer represented by -(SiCH₃(NH)_{1.5})_n- and -(SiMe₂OSiMe₂OSiMe₂(NH))_n- was obtained. This
25 polymer had a weight average molecular weight (as determined using polystyrene as a standard) of 4438.

Next, the copolymer was subjected to solvent displacement to give a PGMEA solution. To the solution was added 2% by mass, based on the mass of the polymer, of the above photoacid generating agent
30 PAG-2. Thus, a photosensitive composition was prepared.

Example 3

The inside of a four-necked flask equipped with a gas inlet tube, a mechanical stirrer, and a Dewar condenser was purged with dry nitrogen. Thereafter, a starting solution was prepared in the flask by
35 diluting methyltrichlorosilane (CH₃SiCl₃), 5% by mole, based on the amount of methyltrichlorosilane, of dimethyldichlorosilane ((CH₃)₂SiCl₂),

and 10% by mole, based on the amount of methyltrichlorosilane, of 1,4-bis(dimethylchlorosilyl)benzene ($\text{ClSi}(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{PhSi}(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{Cl}$) with pyridine to give a total monomer concentration of 10% by mass and was cooled on ice. Ammonia (NH_3) was mixed little by little into the starting solution
 5 through the gas inlet tube to cause an ammonolysis reaction.

After the completion of the reaction, a copolymer represented by $-(\text{SiCH}_3(\text{NH})_{1.5})_n-$, $-(\text{SiMe}_2(\text{NH}))_n-$, and $-(\text{SiMe}_2\text{PhSiMe}_2(\text{NH}))_n-$ was obtained. This polymer had a weight average molecular weight (as determined using polystyrene as a standard) of 4388.

10 Next, the copolymer was subjected to solvent displacement to give a PGMEA solution. To the solution was added 2% by mass, based on the mass of the polymer, of the above photoacid generating agent PAG-2. Thus, a photosensitive composition was prepared.

Each of the photosensitive compositions were measured for
 15 storage stability, film thickness limit, film hardness, and photosensitivity as follows.

· Storage stability

Each photosensitive composition was adjusted to a concentration of 40% by mass and was then placed and hermetically sealed in a 100-
 20 ml glass bottle. Each of the glass bottles was stored in a thermostatic oven kept at 50°C for 5 days. The weight average molecular weight of the polymer before the storage was compared with the weight average molecular weight after the storage to evaluate the stability of the photosensitive composition. The lower the percentage increase in the
 25 molecular weight of the polymer, the better the stability of the photosensitive composition.

· Film thickness limit

Photosensitive compositions having concentrations suitable for the formation of films having desired thicknesses on a glass substrate by
 30 spin coating at 500 rpm were provided. Coatings were formed in thicknesses increased from 3 μm at increments of 0.5 μm and were prebaked at 90°C for one min. The whole surface of the prebaked coatings was then irradiated with light emitted from a low pressure mercury lamp at 100 mJ/cm^2 . The exposed coatings were exposed to a
 35 humidified environment of 30°C and 80% RH for 5 min, were then post-baked at 200°C for 3 min, and were finally baked at 300°C for 30 min.

The substrates were cooled to room temperature and were then examined for cracking under an optical microscope. Film thickness limit values in the following table are the maximum film thickness which does not cause cracking.

5 · Film hardness

For each photosensitive composition, a 1 μm -thick film baked at 300°C was provided by the above method. The hardness of the films thus formed were measured by a pencil hardness measurement method specified in JIS (Japanese Industrial Standards) K 5400 8.4.

10 · Photosensitivity (sensitivity)

A silicon substrate, on which a thin silicon nitride film as an antireflection film had been deposited, was provided. Each of the photosensitive compositions was coated onto the silicon substrate to a thickness of 0.8 μm . Each coating was prebaked at 100°C for 90 sec,
15 was then loaded in a KrF exposure system, and was exposed through a photomask, which can provide line and space patterns of 0.25 μm , while varying the exposure. The coatings were then exposed to a humidified environment of 40°C and 80% RH for 3 min, were then brought into contact with an aqueous tetramethylammonium hydroxide (TMAH)
20 solution, were finally washed with pure water.

An exposure necessary for providing a desired 0.25 μm pattern line width was determined under an electron microscope and was defined as sensitivity. When the exposure is unsatisfactory, the line width is broadened (that is, the space width is narrowed). On the other
25 hand, when the exposure is excessively large, the line width is narrowed (that is, the space width is broadened). The lower the sensitivity value, the higher the photosensitivity.

	Comparative Example 1	Comparative Example 2	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Initial value	4729	4240	4866	4438	4388
After test	7675	5080	4902	4487	4388
Increase (%)	2946 (+62%)	840 (+20%)	36 (+1%)	49 (+1%)	0 (0%)
Film thickness limit	3.5 μm	4.0 μm	10.0 μm	5.5 μm	10.0 μm
Film hardness	5H	2H	5H	5H	5H
Photosensitivity	15 mJ/cm ²	60 mJ/cm ²	25 mJ/cm ²	15 mJ/cm ²	25 mJ/cm ²

Table 1 shows that, for Examples 1 to 3 wherein a part of constitutional units of the polysilsesquiazane had been replaced by a linking group other than a silazane bond, the storage stability was significantly higher than that in the case of Comparative Examples 1 and 2 in which no such linking group had been provided in the constitutional units of the polysilsesquiazane. Likewise, for Examples 1 to 3, an improvement in the film thickness limit could be achieved over the film thickness limit in the case of Comparative Examples 1 and 2. In this connection, it should be particularly noted that, for Examples 1 and 3 wherein a benzene ring was contained in the principal chain of the polymer, the film thickness limit was 2.5 times larger than that in the case of Comparative Example 2 wherein a benzene ring was contained in the side chain. It is also apparent that an improvement in properties in Examples 1 to 3 could be achieved without sacrificing the film hardness. In this connection, it should be particularly noted that, for Examples 1 and 3 wherein a benzene ring was contained in the principal chain of the polymer, the film hardness was 2.5 times larger than that in the case of Comparative Example 2 wherein a benzene ring was contained in the side chain. It is also apparent that an improvement in properties in Examples 1 to 3 could be achieved without significantly sacrificing the photosensitivity. Rather, it should be noted that, for Examples 1 and 3 wherein a benzene ring was contained in the principal chain of the polymer, an improvement in photosensitivity could be achieved over the photosensitivity in the case of Comparative Example 2 wherein a benzene ring was contained in the side chain.

Industrial Applicability

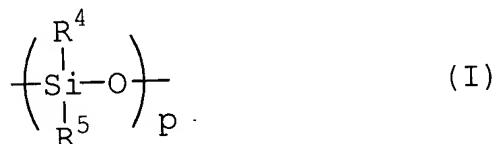
Thus, when a part of constitutional units of polysilsesquiazane is replaced by a linking group other than the silazane bond, the storage stability of a photosensitive composition can be enhanced without sacrificing the photosensitivity of the photosensitive composition and the hardness of an interlayer insulation film formed from the photosensitive composition. Further, the selection of the alternate linking group can enhance the film thickness limit of the interlayer insulation film formed from the photosensitive composition. Further, the insulation film formed from the photosensitive composition has low permittivity properties, is excellent in mechanical properties such as abrasion resistance, and can realize the formation of a fine pattern having excellent properties.

CLAIMS

1. A photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film, characterized by comprising: a modified polysilsesquiazane having a weight average molecular weight of 500 to 200,000 comprising basic constitutional units represented by formula $-\text{SiR}^1(\text{NR}^2)_{1.5}-$ wherein R^1 's each independently represent an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group; R^2 's each independently represent hydrogen, an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group, up to 50% by mole of said basic constitutional units having been replaced by a linking group other than the silazane bond; and a photoacid generating agent.

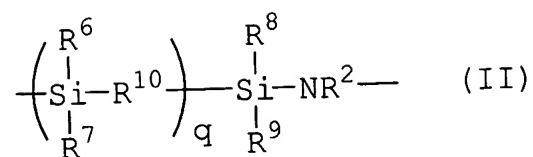
2. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to claim 1, wherein said modified polysilsesquiazane further comprises 0.1 to 100% by mole, based on said basic constitutional units, of other constitutional units represented by formula $-\text{SiR}^3_2\text{NR}^2-$ and/or $[\text{SiR}^3_3(\text{NR}^2)_{0.5}]$ wherein R^3 's each independently represent hydrogen, an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group; and R^2 's each independently represent hydrogen, an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group.

3. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said linking group is represented by formula (I):



wherein R^4 and R^5 each independently represent hydrogen, or an alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkylamino, alkylsilyl, or alkoxy group; and p is an integer of 1 to 10.

4. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said linking group is represented by formula (II):



wherein R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , and R^9 each independently represent an alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, alkylamino, alkylsilyl, or alkoxy group; R^{10} represents an oxygen atom or an alkylene, alkenylene, cycloalkylene, arylene, alkylimino, or alkylsilylene group; R^2 's each independently represent hydrogen, an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group; and q is an integer of 1 to 10.

5. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to claim 4, wherein R^6 , R^7 , R^8 , and R^9 represent a methyl group, R^{10} represents a phenylene group, R^2 represents hydrogen, and q is 1.

6. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein said photoacid generating agent is selected from the group consisting of sulfoxime compounds and triazine compounds.

7. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to any one of claims 1 to 6, which further comprises 0.1 to 40% by mass, based on the photosensitive composition, of a dissolution preventive selected from the group consisting of t-butoxycarbonylated catechol, t-butoxycarbonylated hydroquinone, di-t-butyl benzophenone-4,4'-dicarboxylate, and di-t-butyl 4,4'-oxydibenzolate.

8. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to any one of claims 1 to 7, which further comprises a nitro- or carbonic ester-containing water-soluble compound as a shape stabilizer.

9. The photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film according to any one of claims 1 to 8, which further comprises a sensitizing dye.

10. A method for forming a patterned interlayer insulation film,

characterized by comprising: forming a coating of a photosensitive composition for an interlayer insulation film, comprising a modified polysilsesquiazane and a photoacid generating agent, said modified polysilsesquiazane having a weight average molecular weight of 500 to 200,000 comprising basic constitutional units represented by formula - $[\text{SiR}^1(\text{NR}^2)_{1.5}]$ - wherein R^1 's each independently represent an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group, R^2 's each independently represent hydrogen, an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms, or a substituted or unsubstituted phenyl group, up to 50% by mole of said basic constitutional units having been replaced by a linking group other than a silazane bond; exposing said coating pattern-wise to light; dissolving and removing the coating in its exposed area; and subjecting the resultant patterned coating in an ambient atmosphere to standing or baking.